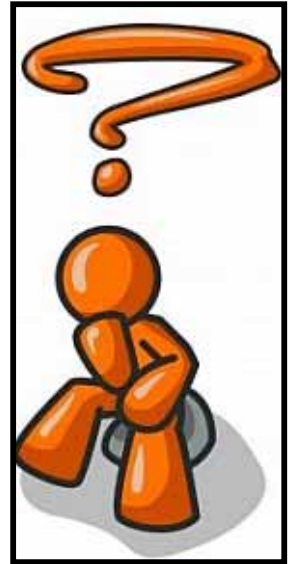


# What About...Earning Your Way into Heaven?

By DR. JERRY A. COLLINS

Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is sure he has a spot in heaven. At least that's what the founder of the group "Mayors Against Illegal Guns" told the "New York Times" in an interview published recently:

Mr. Bloomberg was introspective as he spoke, and seemed both restless and wistful. When he sat down for the interview, it was a few days before his 50th college reunion. His mortality has started dawning on him, at 72. And he admitted he was a bit taken aback by how many of his former classmates had been appearing in the "In Memoriam" pages of his school newsletter. But if he senses that he may not have as much time left as he would like, he has little doubt about what would await him at a Judgment Day. Pointing to his work on gun safety, obesity, and smoking cessation, he said with a grin: "I am telling you, if there is a God, when I get to heaven, I'm not stopping to be interviewed. I am heading straight in. I have earned my place in heaven. It's not even close."



So bettering a quality of life on earth for the masses by working on gun safety, obesity, and smoking cessation is an acceptable divinely approved method

of entering heaven. Really? And who determined that? Michael Bloomberg did, and there is no question about it, "I'm not stopping to be interviewed. I am heading straight in. I have earned my place in heaven. It's not even close." (<http://www.weeklystandard.com/michael-bloomberg-i-have-earned-my-place-in-heaven/article/786943>)

These remarks reflect a common misperception of how things are going to shake-out at the final judgment. Many people believe that if their good works outweigh their bad works, then they will have eternal life. Likewise, if their bad works outweigh their good works, they may not get into heaven. The problem with this reasoning is that it has absolutely no support in Scripture.

- **By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin** (Romans 3:20).
- **For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast** (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- **He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life** (Titus 3:5-7).

- **Where then is boasting?** It is excluded. By what kind of law? **Of works?** No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is **justified by faith apart from works of the Law** (Romans 3:27-28).
- **For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away** (Isaiah 64:6).
- **But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace** (Romans 11:6).
- **What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works he has something to boast about but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" ...just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works** (Romans 4:1-6)
- **Nevertheless, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified** (Galatians 2:16).
- **Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity** (2 Timothy 1:9).
- **If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved** (Romans 10:9).

Hmmmmmm.....